

Sanctification and Freedom From Sin

Lesson Scope: [Romans 6](#)

Lesson Focus

After identifying the universal guilt of man in chapters 1-3, Paul reveals God's wonderful plan to justify and reconcile mankind to Himself (Romans 3:21-5:21). The marvelous fact is that, when even the depths of sin have been reached, God's grace is sufficient to deliver. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (5:20). Should we then continue in sin as a way of life so that grace can be demonstrated (Romans 6:1)? God forbid! Paul explains how grace is magnified by the Christian's sanctification from sin.

Then in Romans 6:15 Paul presents a question similar to that in verse 1. We no longer live under the Law, which called for absolute holiness but did not provide the needed power to attain it. May we plan to sin occasionally because we now live in the day of grace? God forbid! Grace does not permit sin; it lifts man above sin, making continual victory possible. God be praised!

This lesson is, in a sense, the bedrock of the Gospel, but many professing Christians stumble at the basic teaching of Romans 6. Memorize the theme verse, and make absolutely sure it is your personal testimony. Challenge yourself to a renewed commitment to claim victory in Christ in everyday life at home, at work, and wherever God leads you.

Through Christ's death and resurrection, the justified believer is "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God." This newness of life translates into daily yielding our "members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

Lesson Aim: To identify fundamentals of holy living.

Theme Verse: [Galatians 2:20](#). I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Lesson Text

Dead Unto Sin

Romans 6:1-14 ¹ What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? ² God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? ³ Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? ⁴ Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection: ⁶ Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. ⁷ For he that is dead is freed from sin. ⁸ Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: ⁹ Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. ¹⁰ For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. ¹¹ Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. ¹² Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. ¹³ Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God. ¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Alive Unto God

Romans 6:15-23 ¹⁵ What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. ¹⁶ Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? ¹⁷ But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. ¹⁸ Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. ¹⁹ I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. ²⁰ For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. ²¹ What fruit had ye then in those things

whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death. ²² But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. ²³ For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Questions for Study

Dead Unto Sin

1. What lessons should we learn from Paul's answer "God forbid"?
 2. How do we know that verses 3 and 4 are not referring to water baptism?
 3. Compare the crucifixion of our old nature (v. 5) with Jesus' crucifixion (v. 10).
 4. Why must a resurrection follow our death to sin?
 5. How can we identify whom we are truly yielded to (6:13)?
- Alive Unto God
6. What is required for us to continue being servants of righteousness?
 7. Enumerate the freedoms we experience as servants of God.

Analyzing the Passage

Two basic questions surface in Romans 6. The question in 6:1 could be restated, "Should we continue to sin in order to receive more grace?" The second question (Romans 6:15) could be restated, "May we plan to sin occasionally, since we are living in the day of grace?" Paul answers both questions with an emphatic no! Grace imparts, not freedom to sin, but freedom from sin and its bondage.

The baptism in verse 3 refers to Holy Spirit baptism, which unites believers with Christ. As death separates from earthly ties, those "baptized into his death" are (potentially) forever freed from sin to live with Christ. This is a spiritual experience not to be confused with water baptism, an outward sign of Holy Spirit baptism.

"Buried with him by baptism" (Romans 6:4) is not referring to immersion, as some promote. Rather, it refers to the believer's identification with the death and resurrection of Christ. The regenerating work of the Spirit brings complete change. Christ, rather than sin, now reigns.

Reckon (Romans 6:11) means "regard." When sin beckons, respond like a corpse responds to the pleas of a friend.

By serving either sin or righteousness, one shows who is truly master (Romans 6:17-18). A professing Christian who willfully sins is showing contempt for the grace of God. The wonder of grace will cause sin to lose its hold on the true child of God.

Principles and Applications

Dead Unto Sin

1. We despise the Spirit of grace by continuing to practice sin (Romans 6:1-2). Abounding grace is evident when we stop sinning. We still need our advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ (1 John 2:1), but we must remember that the purpose of salvation is to save people from their sins.

2. If we are truly crucified with Christ, His resurrection will be demonstrated in our lives (Romans 6:4-5). Salvation comes alone through the blood of the Lamb. We can know that the blood has been applied if our lives reflect Christlike actions. We expect the drunkard to lay down his bottle at the foot of the cross. Likewise, we must lay down our expressions of bitterness, lust, anger, and all other works of the flesh.

3. Christ died to break the power of sin (Romans 6:6-7). "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). John the Baptist introduced Jesus by saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). To be free from sin is the greatest freedom we can have in this life.

4. We must reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God (Romans 6:8-11, 19). "I can't help the way I act; it's the way I'm made!" This old excuse will never stand in the court of heaven. Our loving Father offers "grace for grace," but we exercise sovereignty over our own will as to whether we will receive it or not. Modern psychology offers plenty of excuses for non-Christian action. We must never justify disobedience, or we frustrate the grace of God by living as though Christ died in vain (Galatians 2:21).

5. We must choose which master we will serve (Romans 6:12-14). Joshua's call still rings: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua 24:15). Paul clearly states in I Corinthians 6:19, "Ye are not your own." When men choose their own way instead of God's way, they are actually choosing Satan's way.

Does my life give evidence that I am choosing God's way? Do the

words I say, the way I treat others, the things I buy, the vehicles I drive, the house I live in, the way I honor authority, the way I dress, and the way I act at home all declare that the Lord Jesus is my Master?

Alive Unto God

6. God's grace delivers men from the bondage of sin (Romans 6:15-16). "For he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). God will ultimately destroy sin and death, but Christ prayed that God would keep us from the evil of the world (John 17). To say we cannot remain faithful is to say that God's provisions for victory are inadequate.

7. God deserves thanks and praise for the grace that enables us to serve Him (Romans 6:17-18). Our hearts should overflow daily with gratitude for our deliverance from sin. We should even praise Him for the victories we anticipate. Remember that "the joy of the LORD is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). If praise is not forthcoming from us, we may not be "[obeying] from the heart" (Romans 6:17). "O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever" (Psalm 136:1).

8. The fruit of sin is shame and death (Romans 6:20-21). God wants all to turn from sin unto Him because it is not His will that any should perish. He tells us clearly that sin will bring death. The pleasures of sin are fleeting; the promises of Satan, empty, and the end of sin, consistent. Why would we want to serve sin? Let your life show clearly that you have found true joy in Christ.

9. Freedom from sin, the only true freedom, is the "gift of God" (Romans 6:22-23). When we are freed from sin, we are free to live for Christ, free to be holy, free from the fear of death, and free to praise Jesus Christ our Lord. No government, no earthly leader, no wealth, no might, or wisdom has ever given freedom as Jesus does, who saves His people from their sins!

Important Teachings

1. We despise the Spirit of grace by continuing to practice sin (6:1-2).
2. If we are truly crucified with Christ, His resurrection will be demonstrated in our lives (6:4-5).
3. Christ died to break the power of sin (6:6-7).
4. We must reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God (6:8-11, 19).
5. We must choose which master we will serve (6:12-14).

6. God's grace delivers men from the bondage of sin (6:15-16).
7. God deserves thanks and praise for the grace that enables us to serve Him (6:17-18).
8. The fruit of sin is shame and death (6:20-21).
9. Freedom from sin, the only true freedom, is the "gift of God" (6:22-23).

Answers to Questions

1. What lessons should we learn from Paul's answer "God forbid"?

The answer "God forbid" teaches us that we cannot be careless in dealing with sin and still be God's children. Man may portray issues as "gray," but God sees clearly in "black and white." We must daily be convinced of the eternal absolutes that God expresses in His law.

2. How do we know that verses 3 and 4 are not referring to water baptism?

To be baptized "into Jesus Christ" and "into his death" requires more than the symbolism of water baptism. Paul is explaining here the effects of Holy Spirit baptism, which must precede water baptism. Jesus said in Acts 1:5, "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."

3. Compare the crucifixion of our old nature (v. 5) with Jesus' crucifixion (v. 10).

Although Christ's sacrifice was once for all, the crucifixion of the flesh is present tense in the believer's life. Paul testified that he died daily (1 Corinthians 15:31). We are called to remember our initial conversion (Hebrews 10:32), but God continues a daily work of grace in us (Philippians 1:6).

4. Why must a resurrection follow our death to sin?

Had Christ remained in the tomb, man's salvation would have been incomplete. In our experience, dying to sin would mean little if it were not followed by new life in Christ.

5. How can we identify whom we are truly yielded to (6:13)?

Our actions will indicate who or what is in control. We cannot claim love for God if we do not clearly demonstrate love for our fellow men (1 John 4:20). The fruit of the Spirit will be evident if we are baptized with the Spirit. Purity, peacefulness, gentleness, submission, mercifulness, and general good works will be our practice, not just our claim.

6. *What is required for us to continue being servants of righteousness?*

We must continue to "[obey] from the heart" the doctrine of Christ Jesus. Our yielding is a daily experience in which we choose by God's grace to do the works of Jesus. We are kept by the power of God as we say yes to Him.

7. *Enumerate the freedoms we experience as servants of God.*

As servants of God, we are free to serve Christ, because our old nature has been crucified and the chains of sin have been broken. We are free from envy, lust, and pride. We are delivered from worldly fashion, from fear of men, and from fear of death.

Summarizing the Lesson

Once I was bound by sin's galling fetters,
Chained like a slave I struggled in vain;
 But I received a glorious freedom,
 When Jesus broke my fetters in twain.
Freedom from all the carnal affections,
Freedom from envy, hatred and strife;
Freedom from vain and worldly ambitions,
Freedom from all that saddened my life.
Freedom from pride and all sinful follies,
Freedom from love and glitter of gold;
Freedom from evil temper and anger,
 Glorious freedom, rapture untold.
Freedom from fear with all of its torments,
Freedom from care with all of its pain;
Freedom in Christ my blessed Redeemer,
 He who has rent my fetters in twain.
Glorious freedom, wonderful freedom,
 No more in chains of sin I repine!
 Jesus the glorious Emancipator,
 Now and for ever He shall be mine.
 —Haldor Lillenas

Research Guide:

Read the chapters titled "Sanctification" and "Baptism" in *Doctrines of the Bible*.